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CC 94-129

From: Aiteen Zhang <aiteen.zhang@tempe.vlsi.com>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 12:55pm
Subject: Complaints about LDS

Dear Sir,

I would like to bring to your attention that a long distance company called "Long Distance Services" (LDS) switched both of my residential phone lines without my authorization.

They called me over the phone and I made it very clear that I am very satisfied with my current long distance company and I DO NOT want to switch. A week later, I received a postcard from LDS saying that if I don't reply within 7 days, that means I agreed to switch which I think is not fair to the consumer at all. I called them up and told them I DO NOT WANT TO SWITCH. However, they ignored my phone call and switched me. I think this is very unfair to the consumers and wasted the consumers' time because I told them VERY CLEARLY over the phone I DO NOT want to switch and they just won't listen.

And, I later found out that they had switched me before they sent me the postcard (from my phone bill). They overcharged me (about 4 or 5 times more expensive) on my oversea calls. It took me a few months to get this settled and upset me a lot. Also, after that, they switched my second phone line without writing or calling me and I found out only after I received my phone bill.

I seriously hope FCC will put some kind of laws to prevent LDS or other long distance carriers to do this type of UNFAIR things to the consumer.

Thanks a lot for your attention.

Sincerely,
Aiteen Zhang
602-926-9571

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From: rich1 <rich1@hal-pc.org>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/96 4:57pm
Subject: SCAM

Dear Federal Communications Commission,

My family got "slammed" a few weeks ago by a company called Access which changed my Long Distance Provider from AT&T without my consent. What happened was, my eleven year old son filled out a Sweepstakes card with our address and dropped it in "a box" without reading the fine print. Apparently, this was a scam because a week later, I was notified that my long distance was switched. It caused me a great deal of hassle to switch back to AT&T. This type of aggressive marketing should be outlawed. Thank you for you time.

-Doris Blum
Houston, Texas

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From: "Stuecker & Associates Inc." <stueckerandassoc@ka.net>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 5:24am
Subject: slamming

You are about five years too late. I get at least one call per week, and sometimes more, from solicitors wanting to speak with the AT&T account manager (now they have started with BellSouth), stating that they are giving me a new discount and all they need is for me to verify my phone numbers. While they probably don't specifically state that they are AT&T, they strongly infer that they are and if you're not alert (or haven't heard the story 1000 times before) you can easily be taken in.

If you had acted decisively when this first started, there wouldn't be the problems that there are now.

Fred Tichenor

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From: "Courtney Smith" <csmith@phonetech.com>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 12:49pm
Subject: Slamming

No company or individual should be allowed to speak for me unless they have authorization to so in writing. In other words, only I or my authorized representative should be able to request a change in long-distance or local service.

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From: Norman Phillips <Norm-Ruby@worldnet.att.net>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 12:32pm
Subject: Slamming

I was changed from ATT to EXEL for long distance service on my home phone about Feb 1997 without my knowledge or consent.

It took until now Aug 1997 to get my service restored to ATT.
I think all local phone service providers should be required to have written consent of a customer before changing their long distance carrier.

I was also charged for a provider of voice mail without my consent. This has been corrected but here too I think written consent should be required before adding a service to a customers account.

Norman Phillips
1219 Cedar Ridge Dr.
St Louis Mo. 63146

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From: "L. Shannon Stephens" <cnsiss@aug.edu>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 2:02pm
Subject: I got slammed too!

Hello,

I am writing because I, like many others, am a slamming victim. I got your e-mail address from the recent article in USA Today on slamming. My complaint is against U.S. Long Distance. They switched my long distance service from LCI to U.S. Long Distance without my permission. During the time of their service, LCI deactivated my "1-800" line to my home and my calling card. Because of complaints to LCI and some confusion on their part, we both mistakenly assumed the problem was with their new computer service and not a result of being slammed. And then, I received my phone bill with a \$1.49 charge to switch to U.S. Long Distance and then another \$1.49 charge to switch back. I promptly called my local carrier (BellSouth), had the charges reversed to U.S. Long Distance and had a "freeze" placed on my account. How frustrating!

Fortunately, I noticed the charges and took care of it. However, it is irritating to think of the many people who don't catch it and end up paying these companies. What a scam on their part...and very profitable too! It is my hope that the FCC will be able to make some decisions that will prevent this from becoming worse than it is already is. It's bad enough that the telemarketers harass us but now, they do it without even asking. If this e-mail can help support a movement for changes, please make it so.

Thanks for your time and the opportunity to make a complaint.

Sincerely,
Shannon Stephens

L. Shannon Stephens, M.S., Counseling Psychologist
Augusta State University, Counseling & Testing Center
2500 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30904-2200
Phone:(706)737-1471 FAX:(706)667-4350
E-Mail:lstephen@aug.edu or cnsiss@aug.edu

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From: "David Ostrander" <ostrande@yar.udayton.edu>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 3:23pm
Subject: Phone Slamming

To whom it may concern,

I just read in the USA Today that phone solicitation companies can send you something that says your long distance company will be changed if I do not respond. That is ridiculous. What if every company started sending me mail saying I have bought something if I do not respond.

I have had may telemarketers call and ask to switch our service and so far no has done so without our permission. But I am concerned about the phone slamming business.

I urge you to do whatever you can to alleviate this problem.

David Ostrander
Ostrande@yar.udayton.edu

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From: Mark Rubacky <Mrubacky@silknet.com>
To: "slamming@comments.fcc.gov" <slamming@comments.f...
Date: 8/4/97 2:00pm
Subject: Slamming...

I was slammed four months ago and I now have a lock on my number to prevent slamming.

I would suggest that not only does the company who does the slamming have to pay fines, pay the company that originally had the customer, but they should have to refund ALL of the charges to the customer, not just charge them the rate they should have gotten.

Mark Rubacky
75 Charlotte Street
Manchester, NH 03103

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From: Deborah A STRAMA <STRAMAD@DOLETA.GOV>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 1:22pm
Subject: Complaint

I recently received 3 phone calls from a person saying that they needed to VERIFY the name on my residential phone account. The person said they were from AT&T. I replied that you should already have such information and was not going to give it to her because my account was UNLISTED. I asked for her name and phone number and when I called it, it was a non-existent (609 area code?) phone number. It apparently was not AT&T.

stramad@doleta.gove

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From: "DMiller" <dmiller@harris.com>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 11:14am
Subject: Unscrupulous Business Practices

A couple of weeks ago I was surprised to learn that my long distance carrier had been changed without my knowledge. I was very aggravated that this could occur. I'm very pleased to learn that you are taking steps to keep others from being victimized by unscrupulous business practices.

I have an additional concern. I subscribe to Caller ID and certain businesses have found a way to circumvent my efforts to avoid calls from solicitors. The unwanted calls register on the home equipment as "unavailable" and I can't simply ignore all "unavailable" calls because cell phone calls register the same way. I've learned from our local phone company that telemarketers are able to hide their name and phone number from Caller ID equipment by installing phone lines that are outgoing lines only. Recently, a very aggressive salesperson called asking for my husband and when I asked if he was a salesman he lied and said no. I wish you would take up the cause and provide a foolproof way to block these unwanted calls from invading our home.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Doris T. Miller

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From: <Lana.Lamon@anixter.com>
To: Reply Requested <slamming@comments.fcc.gov>
Date: 8/4/97 3:30pm
Subject: Rules regarding long distance and local carriers

To whom it may concern:

I spent last three and half years working as a Telecommunications Billing Analyst for major corporations in Chicagoland area. Slamming is something companies deal with every billing cycle. I am glad that FCC is taking a serious steps on implementing rules by which all telecommunications carriers should obide. Here are several recommendations:

1) When switching long distance services from one carrier to another, only written requests signed by company's telecommunications management should be honoured by the telephone service provider. Verbal approvals should not be used as a toll to switch telecommunications services. If provider decides to ignore this rule or fails to prove written request to switch services, consumer/company should have right not to pay charges billed on the telephone bill at all.

2) Pay - per - call cellular and paging services.
Local phone companies bill corporations for the cellular/paging services that employees use in order to call friends and family. Unlike 900# services, psychic lines, lottery, numbers etc. these lines cannot be blocked on the telephone switches. This is mostly due to the fact that cellular/paging services providers for pay per call services refuse to provide consumer with blocks of numbers they use for mentioned services. Local phone company in most cases does not wish to be involved in this process, since they get there portion of the profit from the cellular/paging carrier, no matter what.

3) Residential customers should have some way of telling their local phone companies they do not wish to be used for blind computer generated marketing calls. This call blocking feature should be a part of general standard package for the monthly service fee charged to consumer on their local telephone bill.

4) All refunds, billing adjustments etc. for both residential and business services should have grace period. It happens too often that billing adjustments are not completed either properly or in a timely manner. Phone company has right to bill 2 years back for their services, or disconnect the service while consumer's hands are tied in this matter. It is time to put both parties on the equal foot.

Thank you for taking your time to read these suggestions and comments.

Sincerely,
Lana LaMon
Billing Analyst Telecommunications
Anixter, Inc.
Wok Phone: 847/715-2461
Internet address: lana.lamon@anixter.com

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From: FREDERIC SCOTT at REAL ESTATE DIV Telephone 505 342-3224
<Frederic.J.Scott@SPA01.usace.army.mil>
To: Receipt notification requested <slamming@comments....>
Date: 8/4/97 3:30pm
Subject: "Slamming"

I think you should bar the marketing practice in which companies send people a letter saying service will be switched if they don't reply within 14 days - or any other time, for that matter.

I think any company practicing 'slamming' should bear all costs of switching consumers without authorization. I DON'T THINK ANYONE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CREATE OR ALTER AN OBLIGATION OF MINE WITHOUT MY EXPRESS, WRITTEN CONSENT.

The old practice of shipping merchandise without authorization was effectively stopped when the government declared such shipments were gifts - the same idea should apply here,

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From: "Culver, Peder" <PCulver@whummer.com>
To: "slamming@comments.fcc.gov" <slamming@comments.f...
Date: 8/4/97 2:13pm
Subject: long distance minutes phone marketing

I have become a regular receiver of calls from long distance resellers and unfortunately a victim. I have notified my phone company and our state public utility commission, but wanted to let you know how exasperating and angering the calls are getting.. I have had two separate companies call me at least twice each claiming to be Ameritech(my local phone company) and wanting to place all my long distance bills onto my Ameritech bill. I have specifically asked if they are representing Ameritech and they say yes-they are Ameritech or were hired by Ameritech to do this. The two companies go by the names of LDC Communications and Vista. LDC originally convinced me to combine my long distance with my Ameritech bill claiming it would not affect my service with my long distance vendor.. It did, however, because now LDC is the long distance vendor and my original vendor is ignored. I believe I have this straightened out with my phone company now after two months of hassels, phone calls and hours of my time. These resellers are blatantly lying to me and should be sued or prosecuted and prevented from continuing to deceive the public. I and most people I know are tired of the solicitation calls from most of the major long distance companies, however I can accept the fact that they are competing, I hope, in forthright manner. I draw the line at deceit and lying.. It is totally unacceptable. I would love to bring them to court so others won't have to go through this.

Also, I was of the understanding that companies could not call on Sundays to solicit changing our phone service.. I received a call on Sunday, August 3d about 2:00 pm from US Telephone wanting to switch me to their service.

Please see that the punishment for the deceit and lying is strong enough to stop LDC and Vista and others like them from their criminal activity. Thank you. Peder Culver, www.pculver@whummer.com. My phone number at my office is 1-920-734-1474 if you wish more information.

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From: <mford@kratzco.com>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 2:56pm
Subject: Slam dunked one too many times . . .

To the FCC,

Anything is better than nothing. Please enact something quickly to protect the consumer (I've been slammed by AT&T 3 times since March). Please remember that the government must force the long distance/local phone companies to become ACCOUNTABLE for any switch in a customer's long distance service. At present, I get conflicting stories or cannot get any answer at all to my questions from the customer service people at these organizations!! Also, please note that not one provided your 888 toll-free number as an option.

My experience to date has been really frustrating. Each company mentioned above points the finger at the other for this activity, and there is no way to track down the rogue culprit who is trying to boost their monthly sales quotas. Finally, the disruption from this to my personal life has been extensive. I can't believe this telecommunications banditry is allowed to exist in the 90's.

I'm in PR and work with all of this nation's top tele journalists, and really would like to see the slamming story come back into the headlines!

Thanks for working on this!

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From: "Jones, Ben" <BJONES@CHKD.com>
To: "slamming@comments.fcc.gov" <slamming@comments.f...
Date: 8/4/97 2:32pm
Subject: Slamming of course

I have been slammed three times by a company named Winstar Gateway. They had just sent me check for the first one just before they slammed again. What I don't understand is why these deceitful practices don't come with major penalties. All they did was pay for my increased billings and new connect fee. Nothing for the aggravation and lost benefits like frequent flyer mileage. In health care we are subject to major penalties for minor mistakes.

These folks are basically committing fraud or at least poor business practices and should be punished accordingly. It's disgraceful that they are not.

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From: Lynne Lopez <lynnelop@mindspring.com>
To: "'slamming@comments.fcc.gov'" <slamming@comments.f...
Date: 8/4/97 1:12pm
Subject: Tougher Rules

I agree with the tougher rules proposed to control phone service 'slamming'. I was slammed in late April of this year and it took until my July phone bill to correct all of the problems incurred by this deceptive practice.

I consider myself a fairly intelligent person, but I didn't realize I had been slammed until seconds before the telephone conversation was over. Then it was too late. I immediately phoned my local phone provider, U.S. West, who put a freeze on my long distance provider, but never the less, other repercussions were immediate. My yearly fee for American Express is covered by MCI, and was rebilled to me in a prorated fashion after the unrequested change. And my MCI long distance bill was separate from my regular bill until July, 1997.

Please, enact rules that would make it unprofitable for competing long distance services to continue these practices.

Lynne Lopez
(719) 574-4183
email:lynnelop@mindspring.com

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From: "Carlos Arguello" <Carlos@eApps.com>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 1:15pm
Subject: slamming

I agree with:

- 1) Making companies pay the phone bills that their "slammed" customers incur. Customers would also be entitled to recover frequent-flier miles and other premiums they lost when slammed.
- 2) The FCC barring a marketing practice in which companies send people a letter saying service will be switched if they don't reply within 14 days.

Regards,
- Carlos

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From: <JAnder3893@aol.com>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 9:55am
Subject: slamming

as a recent victim of a slamming, i found it took approx 6 hrs of my time over 3 days to get back my carrier. a pic freeze does no good because a time reseeler is allowed to use the pic code of the carrier they buy the time from. the fcc needs to set regs to restrict use of pic codes and EXTREMELY stiff penalties for slamming.

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From: Richard Skoglund <ricks@wizard.com>
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")
Date: 8/4/97 11:02am
Subject: New Regulations

Please implement the new "slamming" regulations as outlined in the today's issue of USA TODAY. I have had nothing but problems with these disreputable companies. Thank You.
Richard Skoglund
Las Vegas, NV

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3